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Donovan Bailey feted at North York show

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Donovan Bailey, the world's fastest man, was honored last night by Metro's Jamaican community in an action-packed musical show in North York.

The Oakville resident, who won the 100-metre gold medal at the Atlanta Olympics, received a rousing reception from a crowd estimated at more than 1,200.

"You have done us proud," Herman Stewart, president of the Jamaican Canadian Association, told Bailey.

The runner's achievement, he said, is a reminder to young people that "dreams do have reality."

The musical tribute to Bailey, which lasted more than two hours and featured reggae, rap, comedy, gospel music and dance, involved some of the best Jamaican-style entertainment Metro can offer.

It was the first event at the new Jamaican-Canadian Centre on Arrow Rd. in North York.

Organizers said the proceeds

will help pay for the partly completed centre, which is in an industrial building and requires \$600,000 worth of renovations.

Effie Stewart, acting Jamaican consul general, said Bailey "has lifted our spirits and done so much for national pride."

She noted the positive contributions Jamaican Canadians are making to Canada.

Alvin Curling, MPP for Scarborough North, described Bailey as "our hero" and "an ambassador."

"I feel so proud," Curling said. "I will relive this for all my life."

Another guest at last night's tribute was Portia Simpson, Jamaican minister of labor, social security and sport.

In a brief thank-you speech at the end of the show, Bailey told the crowd he appreciated the tribute and said he admired his parents as his role models.

"I advise others to do that in the community," he said, adding, "It's what you do and not what you say that's important in life."